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AUBER'S NEW OPERA.

Auber's new opera, "*Le premier jour de bonheur*," recently produced in Paris, has been received with immense favor. The following account will give some idea of its character:

The overture is a sort of pot-pourri of the leading airs of the opera. You will have noticed that M. Auber is addicted to this kind. It was admirably played by the orchestra of the Opera Comique—one of the best in the world—and the curtain rose upon the first act. It must be confessed that it is the least attractive of the three, though containing some gems, such as Capoul's air,

Attendez encore

Le premier jour de bonheur!

which he sings so perfectly, so exquisitely, as to cause the entire audience to applaud with frenzy. There was no resisting the demand for an encore of this chef d'œuvre; so the artist began it over, and as he ceased singing, was greeted with shouts of pleasure, even from the ladies, those delicate creatures who generally content themselves with putting together their little white kidded hands in the quietest manner. But on this occasion, and while under the influence of the melody and the artistic manner in which it was sung, they cried "Bravo," flung their bouquets at the fortunate tenor and clapped their hands audibly. This was the first success of the evening. After it came an air sung by Mme. Cabel with all her accustomed facility of execution, though I must confess that the affectation of this artiste and her pinched utterance detract from the pleasure her fine performance would otherwise give.

The second act is the triumph of the opera. In it Djelma sings the "*Chanson des Djinns*," a kind of *berceuse* of undoubted original color, sweet and soft as a zephyr; an air which takes possession of the ear at once and haunts it ever after. To have written that alone must be to the composer an honor. As Mdle. Marie Roze, who is as beautiful as a houri in her eastern costume, sighed out the last note of this delicious melody, the enthusiasm of the public broke out afresh, and, perforce, the *morceau* was repeated. I think the accompaniment one of the sweetest things Auber ever wrote, and I see that the Parisian critics dwell upon it as evincing in the highest degree the wonderful talent of the maestro. But there is a blot in the opera after the above exquisite *chanson*. Mme. Cabel sings then "*Suzanne et le Caporal*," and if the purpose was to cause the elegance, the chaste abandon of the preceding air to become all the more remarkable, there can be no doubt that this was accomplished. I cannot render the matter clearer to your mind, than to suppose that after a draught of the most delicious Imperial Tokay, you had forced upon you some New Jersey "blue ruin." It was plain to observe that the transition did not please the audience. The act closes, however, most brilliantly. A corporal sings a drinking song to a waltzing air, the effect of which is most *entrainant*. Spite of the fact that one of the most well-bred and fastidious of audiences was assembled in the theatre, the music overcame them, and a sound of feet keeping time became audible. M. Auber must have considered this a notable triumph for his waltz. It were worth crossing the Atlantic to hear the orchestra play that melody.

It was, of course, evident by this time that the success of the opera was a *fait accompli*, and the third act came to confirm all sanguine anticipations on the subject. Although there are not numerous beauties in it, yet two of the pages are so beautiful, so admirable, as to terminate the opera in the most glorious manner. The first, a duo between Mme. Cabel and Mdle. Roze, a charming nocturne, commencing,

Retarde la naissante Aurore
O nuit! une heure encore!

is an inspiration in its sweetness and originality. The public demanded an encore, and endeavored to have it sung a third time, so much did the music captivate them. The other capital *morceau* of this act is the triumph, the supreme effort of Capoul, and was encored amid tumultuous applause. It is one of the most tender, melancholy chants of a hopeless love which could be imagined. Its sentiment is touching and beautiful. The following verse will give you some idea of the bijou:

Ce nom! un jour peut-etre
Lorsque mon cœur brisé cessera de souffrir,
Seul, mon dernier ami pourra le reconnaître
Dans mon dernier soupir!

After this, as all terminates happily, Capoul sang joyously that his first "*Jour de Bonheur*" had really come at last, and the curtain fell amid such applause as must have stirred the hearts of the composer and the artists to their innermost depths. Calls for the former were reiterated, and Capoul came forward to announce, in accordance with the usual custom, the names of the authors of the libretto and of the music; but ere the artist could utter a word, he was forced to stand some time bowing acknowledgment of the "bravos" and applause directed to himself. When he uttered the name "Auber," the house literally shook with the applause, and the appearance of the latter was insisted on. He had left the theatre, however, and the fact was made known to the disappointed audience.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ROME, February 20.

DEAR MR. WATSON:

I wish I could write you something of my transports—something of the ecstasy, the delight that I find here in this old-time city—here where every day is a poem, where life is an ineffable dream-picture, where the dark shadow of Eternal Ages mingles with the brightsun-glow of the present; but although I came here for leisure, I find myself limited for time, more pressed with the activities of life than in Paris. Every day I go out to see some of the glories of Rome, but this is not necessary for the perfection of ideal happiness. The divine beauty flows in to me through my chamber casement—it is borne in on the morning air and noon-day sun; therefore I shall not trouble you with long details of antique wonders, however impressive to me—for have you not the eloquence of Gibbon and the poetry of Byron?—but speak rather of the present than the past, the living than the dead. And first let me tell you how and where I am placed. If you are familiar with the charming pictures of Italy that Andersen presents in his "*Improvvisatore*," especially those of Rome, then you will recognize our locale. You will remember he says:

"Whoever has been in Rome is well acquainted with the Piazza Barbarini, in the great square, with the beautiful fountain, where the Tritons empty the spouting conch-shell, from which the water springs upward many feet. Whoever has not been there knows it, at all events, from copper-plate engravings; only it is a pity that in these the house at the corner of the Via Felice is not given—that tall corner-house, where the water pours through three pipes out of the wall down into a stone basin. That house has a peculiar interest for me—it was there that I was born." Adjoining this historic *casa* we reside, in a spacious apartment *du cinquième*, up under the golden eaves, high up in the beautiful blue heavens, and from my easterly chamber I look across the Piazza Barbarina, and see the solemn pile of Roman grandeur, the palace, now inhabited, indeed, by a legitimate Barbarini prince, but, from economic or other reasons, he rents a portion of this antiquated building to two of our most distinguished artists—Story and Tilton. There are three of the lower and smaller rooms containing pictures that the Prince generously throws open to visitors. Here I saw the world-famous picture of the sad-fated Beatrice Cenci, by Guido, a picture with which *tout le monde* is familiar through painted copies or copper-plate engravings. There is also a portrait by the divine Raphael of his sweetheart, the baker's daughter (La Fornarina)—a picture full of warmth and glowing color, the eyes languid, yet fiery—the whole capable of inspiring a poetic enthusiasm, but not lifting the soul to the infinite, as do his heavenly Madonnas. A portrait of the heavenly Cecilia interested me; the picture is large, and has the usual accessories of enormous harp and adoring cherubim. Sancta Cecilia is a true Roman woman, not at all attenuated by her divine inspirations.

Another spot commemorated in Andersen's poetic romance is the Convent of the Capuchins. This stands in almost annoying nearness to us, for the clang of its great *campanello* marking the quarter hours day and night is quite trying to inexperienced nerves. But as a compensation I go almost daily to adore St. Michael, by Guido, an altar piece to one of the side chapels. No picture that I have yet seen in Rome has given me so much pleasure; here I find power, beauty, splendor and grace combined in this mighty Saint. It is Michael's combat with the dragon; the dragon lies prostrate, and Michael's left foot is placed upon the monster's head. The right hand, uplifted, holds a poignard, and in the left is the chain wherewith to bind the dethroned arch-enemy. No engraving conveys any idea of the splendor of this magnificent picture. The coloring is heavenly—the angelic beauty of the face is *ravissante*. As often as I visit it I find in it fresh inspirations.

Still another association that endears that spot and makes its holy ground is the circumstance that in this group of houses is one just under my window, but opening into the Piazza Barbarini, wherein dwelt our celebrated countrywoman, Margaret Fuller, Marchioness Ossoli. Here she lived and loved; here her great, free soul sighed and sorrowed, struggled and prayed for the liberation of Rome; here, too, she wrote many of those palpitating thoughts that will be preserved as long as there are minds to appreciate the True, the Beautiful and the

Sublime. Of her residence here she writes: "I am again in Rome, and for the first time situated entirely to my mind. I have the sun all day. * * * It is very high, and we have pure air, and the most beautiful view imaginable. The house looks out upon the Piazza Barbarini, and I see both this palace and the Pope's (the Quirinal)."

But to come back to the living: one of my great desires in coming here to Rome was to see the mighty Liszt, for here, as you know, he has made his residence during the past four years. On my arrival I immediately made inquiries about him, his residence, and how I could obtain a presentation, but the accounts given of him were not very encouraging. The Abbé was described as eccentric and capricious, and in society often almost rude, and that an introduction was almost an impossibility—*enfin* everybody was afraid of him, and no one would venture to present me. In my despair and distraction at the great maestro being so near, and yet so inaccessible,

("Thou art so near, and yet so far,")

I wrote him a note inquiring if he had a few moments to give to a young American girl, who wished to pay her homage to the illustrious maestro Liszt. To my note I received a prompt and very kind response, appointing the following Friday (his reception day) for an interview. On Thursday I attended a *matinée* given under the patronage of Liszt by one of his pupils, a young man named Sgambati, at the *Galerie Dantesque*—a small hall, whose walls are hung with beautiful paintings. The concert was very delightful, as you will see by the programme:

Schumann-Sonate en ré min. p. et v.
Beethoven Quatuor en do op. 59, No. 3.
Mendelssohn Trio en ré min. op. 49.

I was much pleased with some details given me by a friend respecting the young artists who performed. I was told that they were old friends, who had studied from boyhood together; that Pinelli, the violinist, had then gone to Leipzig to complete his studies under the direction of Joachim, where Sgambati was intending to follow him when he met Liszt, who interested himself in him, and promised to instruct him—so for four years Sgambati has never left Rome, but studied with Liszt in the most furious manner. And now that his art-companion has returned, they give weekly *matinées*; where their fervor and brilliancy in playing wins for them great admiration. During the concert I had the delight of seeing Liszt walking around among the audience, recognizing his friends, and stopping to converse with some highly-favored ones; then listening with anxious interest to his young pupil, and applauding *vivement* his success. We have all read descriptions of Liszt in his new ecclesiastical dress, but still it affects us strangely—the short coat and knee-breeches, the slippers with their great silver buckles, and the enormous hat—how different from the former Liszt, with his conventional dress and his breast covered with decorations! When the concert was over the Abbé held a levee beside the piano; so, pushing my way through the crowd, I awaited my turn to speak with him. In a moment his piercing glance rested upon me, and, advancing, I pronounced my name. "Ah!" he said, with a most affable smile, "is it you that has committed the beautiful crime of writing to me uninvited?" His manner towards me was most cordial, and

after a few minutes' talk he said: "You will come to me, then, to-morrow, but come early—I would like to see you before my reception hours"—from two till four. The next day, accompanied by mamma and my sister, I arrived at the old Convent of Santa Francesca Romana. This Convent is situated in the immediate vicinity of the Coliseum and other ruins of imposing grandeur; it is a low building, with a small iron door, upon which I read the divine name, "L'Abbé Liszt," and ascending one broad flight of stone steps, we came to the door of his apartment. There we met the footman, who showed us through a large ante-chambre, in which stands a grand piano, into the drawing room. This is vast in size, and very handsomely furnished; in one corner stands an exquisite statuette of St. Elizabeth, and pictures and *objets religieux* adorn the walls. Occupying a conspicuous place in the drawing room is a Chickering Concert Grand, a Christmas gift, presented by Mr. Frank Chickering himself, as the Abbé afterwards told me. This explains, I presume, the discarded instrument in the ante-chambre. After waiting a few moments, the Abbé entered, and advancing towards me, welcomed me by extending both hands; and, leading me towards the piano, said: "Here we will be at our ease. Now play me something," said the Master, "for I perceived by your appreciation of the music yesterday at the concert that you are an artist." This I disclaimed, but told him what I had studied and by whom I had been instructed, mentioning Mr. Mills and Mr. Gottschalk as being my earliest teachers. Mr. Mills the maestro remembered very well. "He used to play to me," he said, "and William Mason and Satter, how are they?" Of Mr. Gottschalk he had a shadowy remembrance in Paris many years ago, but he had lately seen some of his music and thought it *très original*. Could I play him any? Running my fingers over the beautiful silver-toned keys, I played him the Last Hope; with this he seemed pleased, then he touched the keys, and the softest, tenderest, sweetest strains were evoked—an improvisation, inspired, I felt, by the piece that I had just played. Then he pressed me to play again, and while hesitating as to my selection he asked if I could not play something more of Mr. Gottschalk's, as he was interested in its peculiar character. I then played to him "Murmures Eoliens," to which he listened with the kindest interest, and responded with a wild Hungarian rhapsody. I spoke of Mr. Gottschalk's Creole duets. "Ah!" he said, "what a pity that you did not bring them; I would have deciphered them with you" (!) I then told him that my sister, who was in the voiture at the door, played them with me. "At the door!" he exclaimed, in great concern. "Why did she not come in?" and starting up, he rushed down stairs, coming so suddenly upon M. that she looked quite alarmed, as if about to take wing. "And is this the way you pay me visits?" he said, helping her to alight; then, upon entering, he placed another chair at the piano, saying: "Now let me immediately hear the Creole duets." We played first "Di que si," then "La Gallina" and "Creole Eyes." With these Liszt seemed perfectly delighted. Leaning over the piano, he watched our hands, and expressed almost boyish pleasure in those trills and runs in the high treble, which, he said, sounded like "oiseaux," and

those parts in which we played with arms interlaced entertained him vastly. "Tiens, que c'est original!" he exclaimed. A young Abbé, with brilliant black eyes, who had meantime entered, Liszt laughingly presented to us as an enthusiastic music-student with whom he played duets, and who practiced daily four hours. Meanwhile the maestro's friends were assembling, and as often as fresh groups arrived we were compelled by his persuasive kindness to repeat our Creole duets. La Gallina seemed to strike him as immensely droll; he tapped the keys to catch the air, inquiring most ingenuously, "Is this it?" His gracious, pleased manner of listening quite divests one of alarm in playing before so august a tribunal. The Abbé praised the excellence of the magnificent piano, and once turning to his visitors, many of whom were Americans, he said in English, of which he speaks a little, "This is an excellent piano. I do not think anything finer can be made," and added that his friend, the little Abbé, thought it marvelous, and styled it the "Coliseum of pianos." During our rests Liszt played several songs by Schumann, and Rossini's "Carita." The latter piece gave me a better idea of that conquering might that makes him the king of the piano. After our duets had been *bissé* and *bissé* Liszt said to me: "Now I want you to play a solo—something very brilliant for the *bonne bouche*." To this I acquiesced by playing Gottschalk's *Miserere du Trovatore*, and if you are desirous to know how this *cheval de bataille* was received, I refer you to a dear friend who resides in Cottage Place.

Liszt is of medium height, slender and erect. His face is fresh and unwrinkled; his large gray eyes have a reposeful calmness, except when playing impassioned music; then the whole face changes, the eyes sparkle and flash, the massive steel-gray hair trembles and shakes, and the head is thrown into a pose of striking grandeur—the whole reminding me of the imposing image of an inspired Numidian lion.

Tout à vous,

CECILIA.

P. S. Please send the Art Journal to 149 Via Felice quinto piano, Roma.

LEIPSIK.—Concert of Chamber Music given by Riedel's Association: G major Trio for Stringed Instruments, Op. 9 No. 1, Beethoven; "Volkslied und Gesänge," for an alto voice, Rubinstein; D major Trio, Op. 70, No. 1, Beethoven; Songs, Lassen, Holstein, Kremling; and Piano Quartet, Op. 47, Schumann.—Eighth concert of the Euterpe Association; Prelude to *Lohengrin*, R. Wagner; Air from *Oberon*, Weber (Mdlle. Spohr); Second Concerto (F minor), Op. 21, Chopin (Mdlle. Dittich, from Prague); Symphony in D minor, Op. 120, Schumann; Solos for Pianos, Bach, Schumann, and Raff; Songs, Kirchner and Schubert.—Concert of the Pauliner Vocal Association: Concert overture (No. 2), Jadassohn; "Der Morgen," for chorus and orchestra, Rubinstein; Air from *Joseph*, Mehul (Herr Wiedemann); Quartets, Hauptmann, Voltmann, and Schumann; Scotch Melody, arranged by Bruch; "Märchen," for solo, chorus, and orchestra, H. Götz; "Das Grab im Busento," for chorus and orchestra, Nessler; "Der Jäger Heimkehr," Reinecke; Notturmo, Chopin; Ballad, Op. 20, Reinecke; "Volkslieder," Herbeck and Silcher; and "Der Landsknecht," for male chorus and orchestra, Harbeck.